

Women's Video Festival: Portrait of The Artist As A Young Woman

photo credit: barbara jabally



A scene from 'A Forest Of Canes' one of the many excellent documentaries shown at the Video Center, which deal with the ever-present oppression of women.

FILM

Film editor Kate Walter and staff have listed below films and festivals being showcased in the metropolitan area.

Carnegie Hall Cinema
887 Seventh Avenue
New York, New York
212-757-

- June 30: Drums Along The Mohawk/Ford/1939: 12:00, 4:05, 8:10
The Grapes of Wrath/Ford/1940: 1:50, 5:55, 10:00
July 1: Not a Pretty Face/Cole-Idge/1975: 12:00, 3:20, 6:45, 10:10
Wanda/Loden/1970: 1:30, 4:50, 8:15
July 2: The Gold Rush/Chaplin/1925: 12:40, 3:30, 6:20, 9:10, 12:00
Le Million/Claire/1931: 2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30
Gone With The Wind/Selznick/1939: 12:00, 2:50, 5:40, 8:30, 11:20
July 5: Late Spring/Ozu/1949: 12:00, 4:10, 8:20
Late Autumn/Ozu/1960: 1:55, 6:05, 10:15
July 6: Isn't Life Wonderful/Griffith/1924: 12:00, 3:15, 6:30, 9:45
Our Daily Bread/Vidor/1934: 1:50, 5:05, 8:20
July 7: Tobacco Road/Ford/1941: 2:05, 5:40, 9:15
How Green Was My Valley/Ford/1941: 12:00, 3:35, 7:10, 10:45
July 8: Lola Montes/Ophüls/1955: 2:15, 6:00, 9:45
Blonde Venus/von Sternberg/1932: 12:30, 4:15, 8:00
July 9: The Circus/1928: 12:00, 3:10, 6:25, 9:40
The White Sheik/Fellini/1952: 1:35, 4:50, 8:05, 11:20
July 10: Shadow of a Doubt/Hitchcock/1943: 12:45, 4:30, 8:15, 12:00
Strangers on a Train/Hitchcock/1951: 2:40, 6:25, 10:10
July 11: French Can Can/Renoir/1955: 12:30, 4:15, 8:05
Moulin Rouge/Houston/1952: 2:10, 5:55, 9:45
Hearts and Minds/Davis/1975: 12:00, 4:45, 9:00
The Ugly American/1963: 1:55, 5:55, 9:55
July 13: La Marseillaise/Renoir/1937: 12:30, 4:45, 9:00
Les Misérables/Boleslawski/1935: 2:50, 7:05

Higher Ground Cinema
26 West 20th Street
New York, New York
212-989-3602

- July 7-11: Modern Times/Chaplin: Wed. & Thurs. 7:00; Fri. 7:00 & 9:00; Sat. & Sun. 5:00, 7:00, 9:00

Movie Theatre 86
80 Saint Marks Place
New York, New York
212-254-7450

- June 30-
July 3: To Be Or Not To Be/
1942: 1:30, 5:00, 8:30
Fri. & Sat. 12:00 mid.
July 4-6: Buck Privates/Lubin/
1941: 1:00, 4:40, 8:20;
Sun. 12:00 mid. This Is
The Army/Curtiz/1943:
2:30, 6:10, 9:50
July 7-10: The Thief of Bagdad/
Berger/1940: 1:45, 5:10,
8:35; Fri. & Sat. 12:00
mid.
All Baba and the Forty
Thieves/Lubin/1944:
3:35, 7:00, 10:25
July 11-13: A Star Is Born/King/
1937: 1:00, 4:45, 8:30
State Fair/King/1933:
3:00, 6:45, 10:30

Museum of Modern Art
11 West 53rd Street
New York, New York
212-256-6100

- July 1: That Certain Thing/Capra
1928: 2:30
Feel My Pulse/La Cava/
1928: 6:00
July 2: Spite Marriage/Sedgwick/
1929: 2:30
Cradle Snatchers/Hawks/
1927: 6:00
July 3: The Cameraman/Sedgwick/1928: 12:00
That Certain Thing/Capra
1928: 2:30
The Love Trap/Wyler/
1929: 5:00
July 5: The Love Trap/Wyler/
1929: Noon
Short Comedies of the
30's 2:30
They Had To See Paris/
Borzone/1929: 6:00
The Big Pond/Henley/
1930: Noon
July 6: The Royal Family of
Broadway/Gardner/1930
2:30
The Big Pond/Henley/
1930: 2:30
Part Time Wife/McCarey/
1930: 8:30
July 8: Part Time Wife/McCarey/
1930: 2:30
Check and Double
Check/Brown/1930:
6:00
July 10: Movie: Crazy/Bruckman/
1932: Noon
Soup To Nuts/Stoloff/
1930: 2:30
Safety Last/Newmeyer/
1923: 5:00
July 11: Once In A Lifetime/Mack
1932: Noon
The Royal Family of
Broadway/Gardner/1930
2:30
The Avenging Con-
science/Griffith/1914:
5:00

Whitney Museum of American Art
945 Madison Avenue
New York, New York
212-794-0630

- June 29-
July 4: Fox/Patoski/Noon, 1:30,
3:00, 4:30
Tues. evening 6:15 &
8:00

The eternal tube glows in American living rooms every evening as visions of Mary Hartman dance in our heads. Home privacy nurtures our relationship with the set, but recently people have been going out to watch TV -- a reaction against all the awful stuff of the screen and a reaction towards the ever growing accessibility of videotape. So wake up, viewers, put down that TV Guide and come to the video with me tonight!

Cruising up Tenth Avenue in the van, we're going to a women's video show, excited about discovering new women artists and seeing some good TV. We luck onto a parking space near the river and walk up West 52nd Street to the Interart Center.

A creaky old elevator rattles its way upstairs and we emerge into a huge loft transformed into a video gallery and three different viewing environments. The show hasn't started yet, so Mary and I sink into the 1940's living room erected in the freight elevator.

We share a cigarette, admire the carpet, and watch some video. This is Maxi Cohen's videosculture, "My Bubi, My Zada," which captures the nostalgia of a visit with the folks. It's complete with sofa, chair, coffee table, lace doilies, plants, photographs, and of course, the television is on playing Cohen's tape of an old Jewish woman explaining how to cook a chicken.

Mary felt like she was in Aunt Sophie's living room in St. Paul, and I could have sworn I was at Grandpa's house in Passaic.

Enough of the relatives. Time to inspect the unique viewing rooms. I melt into the room with the fluffy lavender pillows and gravitate toward the monitors which are showing my room and the other viewing rooms. Hmmm. The women in the other room look interesting so I wave to them. Howdy! They think I'm silly and egocentric cause I'm enjoying watching myself. A tape plays while we're monitoring the screen. "We're just an all girl's band -- dealing with the facts and the pain."

And now -- for our viewing pleasure -- The Women's Interart Center presents -- without commercial interruption -- The Women's Video Festival of 1976. The tapes presented have been selected by a jury system who've solicited invitations from video makers throughout the United States and Canada.

In the first half of this particular program, Susan Milano's tape, "Tattoo," explained what retains the colorful butterfly on my shoulder, while Susan Mogul's five minute short, "Dressing Up," spoofed hunting for clothes bargains. By the second half, our bodies had unconsciously drifted into the mattress room -- which vies with the pillow room for comfort. No one selected the third room with the traditional wooden chairs.

Festival co-ordinator, Susan Milano, said the viewing environments were designed to give video an identity separate from movies and to create an atmosphere of "watching TV at a friend's house." Well, I sure felt cozy, lying around watching the

set with good company. I only wished I'd brought some munchies.

The entire festival contains over forty tapes, spanning a three week playing period. Obviously, I've only seen a fraction of the offerings, but I'm impressed by the diverse motives of the various video artists, many of whom employ a "creative documentary" approach.

Spectra Feminist Media's, "A Forest of Canes," records the oppression of women through footwear, particularly the ancient art of footbinding. Spectra's fine research combined with contemporary parallels of platform shoes makes this tape spin in your head. "Women of Northside Units" by Christine Nochese, Marisa Gioffre, and Valerie Bouvier heralds how conservative-looking Brooklyn women became awakened to feminism through a battle with the government to preserve their neighborhood.

Louise Denver and David Redom's, "Streets of Ulster," shot in the midst of battlefields in Northern Ireland, gives an in depth look at the people affected by this war. Many of the tapes deal with topics specifically relevant to women, such as, abortion, rape, and the women's movement.

Manifesting itself throughout the festival is the dominant feeling that women are grabbing hold of video as a medium to spread "our story" -- as a medium for reaching the public and making changes. And why not use video? It's portable; it doesn't require the money necessary for filmmaking.

Women who are still boxed out of technical and directorial positions in the film and television industries can form their own video companies or do independent work. Working in half-inch video doesn't involve joining a union or competing for glamour girl jobs like in a Hollywood scene.

Recently, it's become impossible for half-inch video to be shown on the air, and thus new places will be opened for women video makers. But until women assume their deserved places in the mass media, a women's festival remains a necessary showcase for programming that relates to what's happening with real women today.

When was the last time you saw a television show with a women character you could identify with? I can't even think of one! While a festival of women's videotapes isn't enough to sustain us through another year of "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," for now women must absorb images of ourselves that are available through videotape.

by Kate Walter



Fluffy Lavender floor pillows make up this most unique viewing room at the Women's Video Center. The environment as well as the video screen provide unusual entertainment.

photo credit: barbara jabally